(Preview) (intro) (menotthere) wassup people tgx here, and today (yo dude, they can't see you) What? Oh right. *comecloser* *fadein* sorry, went to see the doctor yesterday, told me I had a severe case of pop-in. (Priceisright) Speaking of which, sly 2 band of thieves (game) Sly 2 band of thieves, more like Sly poo band of heaves hurhurhur. Nawm jus kiddin, this game's pretty good. So what is there to say about this game, well about an hours worth of stuff evidently. In all seriousness, sly cooper and the thevious raccoonus was a modest hit critically and commercially. It sold worse than both of its sister games but earned enough to justify a sequel. But they didn't intend on just making any old sequel, they wanted to reinvent and redefine what sly cooper was. And made a fairly risky sequel with new gameplay, a new enhanced focus on story and all around new presentation. The funny thing about all 3 of the gen 6 playstation mascots is that they all had a very sudden shift in their second instalments that really tried to set the bar for what the ps2 was capable of and define what a 6th gen game was and could be. And, well there's a reason why there's an argument to be made about each of these second instalments being the best in their respective franchises. But I'd say that while the fanbases of ratchet and jak are fairly split on what the best game was, sly is a majority case where sly 2 is the preferred game. Back when I was halfway passionate about this series I was a flag bearer of sly 3 being better and in many ways I still am, it's just not that simple anymore. There was a time where I thought that sly 2 was the better game, but I never really believed it in my heart. I convinced myself of that because I was under the impression that it was what I was supposed to think. I was a pretty big sheep at one point, however self awareness is a virtue. But not to be that guy, although I do love being that guy, sly 2's quality consensus might also have something to do with the fact that sly 2 is the best selling game in the series by a modest margin of roughly half a million units, with an estimated 1.81 million units being sold. And while that's nothing to scoff at, being the tertiary ps2 mascot sly was unfortunatly outsold by jak 2 and going commando by a less than modest margin like sly 1. But ever since its september 14th 2004 release, sly 2 band of thieves was critically acclaimed and basically the reason why sly cooper even still has a cult fanbase to this day. After revisiting sly 2 I can safely conclude that it was within spitting distance of perfection, but dropped the ball like a quadruple amputee basketball player. (Me) so, with cards firmly laid on the table, let's take a deeper look at sly 2 band of theives. Interestingly Sly went the way of jak and shortened the title in the second instalment, which is good because jak and daxter the precursor legacy as well as Sly Cooper and the thievius raccoonus were the vocal equivilant of an enima. Thankfully ratchet and clank didn't follow suit because if the title were ratchet going comman-ya know what, I'm not finishing that sentence. (Game) I should specify that I'm not playing the ps2 version, I'm playing the somewhat inferior hd version on the ps3. Which was famously ported by shitzaru hackfraud games. The videogame industry's answer to the ebola virus. Glenn Egan, I know you're probably hurting for money, but please don't sue, me that's just my opinion. My opinion that you made one of the worst games ever, secret agent clank ps2 you fucking ha-(censored) (normal) sorry, let's try that again. So this is the HD version that aside from making the textures sharp and maintaining 60fps, it's probably the easiest way to play the game but if you can get past the lower resolution, The ps2 version is the superior version for being the game as intended, there aren't too many enhancements to the hd version beyond the visual and there are some pretty big issues and aspects lost in translation. Which means allow me to introduce… the sanzaru

games visual glitch showcase episode 2. We start out with the most prominent issue, pop-in almost every episode has some level of egregious pop-in. Sly cooper never had the best draw distance but it always made sure to disguise it in some way. But in the hd version there are random objects that arbitrarily pop in and out of existance on a whim, sometimes even objects in front of your own face. It's a never ending problem that persists through the entire game and only gets worse. Or how about some full page graphics where the graphic doesn't reach the edge of the screen so part of the gameworld is visible on the edge of your view. Then there were the times where slys swinging animation would fuck up, so instead of his body reacting to the swinging appropriately, he would swing with half of his body in a t-pose, either that or he's severely botching the ymca dance. How about carmelita's model clipping through her shirt, god, I almost forgot this game was made by sanzaru. Most hilariously how there were aspects of the game that were only built with a 4:3 aspect ratio in mind and so in upscaling it to 16:9 there were funny happenings in the outer edges of the screen most notably when the mammoth that you melt out of the ice in episode seven supposedly runs into the water and refreezes complete with comedy splashing sound only to stop right at the edge of the screen because it would have been out of the players view in a 4:3 aspect ratio (errormessage). And as like before, anything that's textured instead of flat has its textures blown up but not upscaled so all textues in this game look blurry as fuck, ps2 textures in hd… dear god, professionally made product my ass. I understand that there's differences in hardware and all of that, but jebus there are some unacceptably bad graphical botches in this game, and would you believe this is the best thing sanzaru games has ever made. Of the 3 games in this HD port or whatever you want to call it, band of thieves really does get off the worst, most of the problem graphical glitches in the other 2 games can generally be ignored but the issues here are front and center all the time. But if you can get past this and look at the game as intended this game still does stand up on it's artstyle. They took what they had previously and refined the style while still maintaining the original charm that the artstyle conveyed to begin with. The comic book style overtones have been doubled down upon this time around with a more distinct graphical presentation. The toon shaded style that they had is more refined with sharper looking models, more consistent texturing and a buttchugging ton of new enhancements and details. Remember how I quipped that the presentation is so comic book esque that you can practically see the biff and kapow graphic. Well that's now been taken to its logical conclusion. (Show) (me) holy copyright infringement batman (game) Yeah, there are many grapghics and sound effects that make this seem much more like a comic book or a Saturday morning cartoon show. So the sound effects are both impactful and punchy but also very cartoony, hell the chapters are called episodes (which never ceases to get me mixed up) and the pause screen is like a commercial break, that's just great. some other enhancements include smoother animation, more variety of environments and setpices, more open and detailed environments better facial animation making for better cinematics and so on, the main character models look crisp as fuck with much more detail and life to them, there was some soft redesigning to all of them so that they look more destinct and everything about them are iconic and they all make sense. Sly's basically unchanged because he already looked exactly as good as was ever going to. This is benleys first time in the field so he'd choose to have an old timey explorers hat because that's probably where most of his knowledge of the outdoors comes from, old timey adventure books, same

goes for the crossbow but enhanced with his modern tech. *The* Murray got into lucha libre between games, and so now in modeling his fighting style off of lucha libre he also wears the mask and he has a massive belt buckle that supposed to look like a championship belt to get across the wrestling style character design. The general design is simple but good but the fact that you could see a silhouette of any of the characters and instantly identify who it is shows the quality of the designs The vivid colors that are assigned to each of the characters are actually seemingly more saturated which contrasts against the generally washed out murky world, but despite the murky environments, they do still look more lively than the first game, the enemy designs are good as are the main villains and side characters along with minor enhancments. Speaking of enhancements, the comic book cutscenes, they look sharper and more defined with better quality illustrations and motion, better use of color and more adherence to what a comic book page would look like. And overall this game just looks more… how do I say this… bouncy? Either way all the animation in this game feels more lively and expressive in turn making the gameworld feel more alive, which seeing as this game has opened up, it's good that the world feels more alive. But it could have been better. You can tell that the ps2 hardware was holding this game back and the developers had a much grander vision of what they wanted to do with the game. There are many things that don't look or feel right. Like how when the characters are all knocked out following jean bison's competition, they all come to standing up because they didn't have a getting up after being knocked out animation. The ball in episode 2 looks very small scale with most of who might be guests relegated to silhouettes in the background so the big heist feels small. The slow motion shot followed by the dam blowing up felt very uncanny and much less grand than I feel they wanted to make. And the lack of a physics engine shows whenever something is falling. It feels very prebaked and stiff. So for all of this game's great aesthetic and consistency, it could have been better and I feel that they wanted to make it better, so this is a game that could actually benefit from a ground up remake, but for some reason I have a feeling that they couldn't do it right because a sizable portion of the quality of this game comes from the quality of the writing, and short of using the exact same voice samples, I don't think they could redo the story and do it anywhere near as well. (me) Do I have any specific examples of why I think that? I feel like I should but no. (game) On the other hand, the soundtrack. Comparisons to the first game's soundtrack is inevitable and while I do think that band of thieves goes for the same thing, I think that band of thieves does it better in that there are actually pieces here that I could see myself listening to generally. Much of this game's soundtrack is atmospheric background noise making for chill rhythms consisting of slow percussion and chill instrumentals, in particular, there's alot of jazz in this game. That said the soundtrack is very liquid in that there's a calm roaming piece for when your out and about which expertly builds atmosphere and fits with the tone of the game, (show) but it seamlessly bleeds into the combat theme that plays whenever you get into a fight which is much more fast paced, exciting and fitting of the fighting feel. (show) It never gets to the point of being outright exciting until the bossfights (showx3) but it's a step in the right direction, and with this game opening up, some areas might have area specific themes, the best being dimitri's club theme (show) While Imay sound like I'm criticizing the soundtrack for being lowkey in many cases, that's not the case. The instrumentation is really well composed and these pieces really fit tonally, so many of these pieces are **perfect** for what they are but they're not going to be something that I'll be

pining to listen to anytime soon. In spite of that there are some really good themes in this game, my absolute favorite piece in this entire game would be the episode (4?) them which is where the gang is at their lowest point and it leads us to a notorious prison and the dramatic tension in the piece used is thick enough to spread on toast (show) and it climaxes with this dramatic sting which is basically the exclamation point on the piece (show) it's fantastic, and the episode 5 theme is similarly tense but is more creepy than dramatic in fitting with that episodes tone. But they do pick up more often and they do and more consistently (showjailbreak) and so it's a step in the right direction and I appreciate the skill involved in integrating the standard theme and fighting theme. It has all of the same qualities of the first games soundtrack and then some, with more upbeat pieces that I can listen to generally. So I can say it's not only a perfect soundtrack for what this game goes for but also it's a generally good soundtrack beyond that. With the presentation out of the way, I've been teasing and implying this already and chances are you've already noticed this from the gameplay being shown, but there is a massive overhaul to the general design of sly 2 over sly 1. I mentioned earlier that while sly 1 was basically a 5th gen game with 6th gen sensibilities, this is the game where they wanted to go all out and essentially show the possibilities of what the 6th gen is capable of. So the first game was linear and now the game has opened up to a hub based semi sandbox structure. I wouldn't necessarily call this a sandbox game because it's still semi restrictive but it is very open ended and built with an explorative quality. It has a mission structure where you have to go all over the hub doing various missions and tasks to set up a heist as a final mission to steal parts of the clockwerk and without context, that sounds weird. (me) I will say though, this game missed an oprotunity in that there's never an oprotunity to collect clockwerks orange(megs) WAKA WAKA (game) So this game is like crash Bandicoot through the filter of metal gear solid by way of assassin's creed. And this is the most significant and biggest improvement in the game over the first. Where the first games levels felt somewhat disjointe and small, by the nature of the setup everything in this game feels much more integrated and big which is also why this game is a bit hard to talk about because you can't just cover one thing at a time, But I'll try. With that said, for now I'm going to be mainly focussing on slys gameplay, we'll get to the other playable characters along with alternate modes later. So there are 8 episodes and with the acception of the last one there is one singular overall goal, set up a heist to try and steal a piece of clockwerks anatomy back from a member of what's called the klaww gang. How do you do this? 3 steps; initial reconisance, setup, heist. Every mission in any given episode is based in one singular sprawling environment and several sub areas of the enviroment, and the missions take on many many forms. The first game resembled an espionage thriller and this game is definitely resembles an action heist movie. It's all about the setup and they payoff and the integration of the gameworld is very impressive, and the variety in gameplay this offers us that ties into the explorative nature of the game is fantastic. So let's start from the ground level of how this game plays. The basic moves are, you can swing your cane which is your main means of attacking, you can jump around and you can cling onto various objects and traverse of the environment around you using the circle button which is one of the primary focuses of the game. Using the circle button is also the button you use to pickpocket guards after sneaking up behind them while unalerted. One thing they added which is very useful is the run command activated with the r1 button. I'd actually forgot that sly 1 didn't have a run button so i kept activating my

binocucom accidentally so that was a big and necessary improvement, but running makes alot of noise which will alert nearby guards instantly. Using these basic moves you traverse these open ended hub levels. And the level design is so intricate, it starts out flat and simple, but then get's more and more complex and sprawling as the game goes on and more and more gratifying to navigate. That's the biggest strenth of episode 8 is the fantastic level design, sense of scope and almost vertigo enducing, hights, that's the highlight but they're all good. Obviously the jump in scale is massive but it can not be overstated how massive this game is compared to its predecessor. You could spend hours just exploring and looking for secrets between missions in some of these levels, and the massively increased scale also forced another innovation, an actual healthbar. (me) *puttingonparty* *raisearms* *finalfantasymusic* (mediocredyachived) (game) They also got rid of the lives system and replaced it with a generous checkpoint system which makes sense for a non level based game. So band of thieves becomes much less do or die, but it's by no means easy. It's far from hard but it's nearly impossible to play this game as a straight action game. This game isn't a straight up stealth game as the stealth based mechanics are still not as deep as they could be; before you'd define the game as such. It's an action stealth game with emphasised combat and platforming mechanics. The stealth **is** still a fairly major focus, so while you can survive fights with minor enemies fairly easily, perhaps even a few minor enemies at a time fairly easily, they hit hard and your health can deplete really quickly if you're not careful or prepared. Even worse are the flashlight guards, they're hard enough to fight one on one, but if you happen to get into a fight that involves multiple flashlight guards, you might as well just cut your losses and run away, which thankfully isn't too hard, they follow pretty vehemently but as long as you're not in an overly open area it shouldn't be too hard to get away unless you end up with 30 people on your tail lining up single file for a cane based beating worthy of the undertaker, but usually you just need to hop on a few rooftops or even just turn a few corners before they give up, the summary being that you can play aggressively, but you'll have a much harder time doing so than if you at least try to stay stealthy. Meaning with the quality of life changes comes compromises, which is good so you can have a better focus on meaningful gameplay without making the gameplay too easy or too hard, the stealth aspect is prominent in the core gameplay and is focused on hevely but if you happen to get seen by pretty much anything you can still fight back easily enough or at worst, leg it in the opposite direction meaning while the stealth isn't as deep as it could have been it fits into the combat mechanics pretty well without one taking away from the other, but there is certainly a fun garish charm to sneaking through an environment or an entire mission unseen. And the open ended nature of this game lets the stealth attributes spread its wings somewhat. First of all, this game gives us a stealth takedown which is really easy to use, it makes alot of noise, so it's good for a smash and grab and hope nobody sees. So taking out unsuspecting guards is easy and add a basting of adrenaline in that you're never sure if you'll get caught in the process of dealing with guards, so you have to be prepared to book it. Sometimes you can just leave guards to their own devices and they respawn quickly anyway, but sometimes they can be in your way or you might have a mission forcing you to take them out and in that respect it's a quick and easy solution that works well, though the later silent one was slightly more unreliable. if you were near a ledge, you can actually fail a takedown. So you wander around the gameworld, whether this be by getting from mission to mission, doing missions or just explore for the sake of itself.

And on your way from a to b you could come across all kinds of fun little moments, from being seen by somebody you didn't see and having to fight for your life or flight for your own good, you could see a guard carrying a special item and have to maneuver yourself over to him without being seen by surrounding guards. The open ended environment gives you multiple places all around you to run away to if you're caught, including designated hiding spots, and there's nothing more tense than a harrowing chase around the hub before hiding under a conveniently placed table and not being sure if they saw you go under the table, are you safe, will they blow up the table? It's very intense. And it makes the game very organic in terms of getting around a hostile environment and makes it very unpredictable. You're never quite sure what to expect as you traverse these hubs, so the stealth is well integrated and really adds to the game. There are also reasons to explore, if you recall I mentioned that you can pickpocket guards if you sneak up behind them and beyond smashing random crap this is a great way to get money, especially if you happen to see a guard with a glowing pocket because they're the ones with a rare treasure that you can steal and sell. So I always enjoyed going around finding guards to pickpocket while I was out doing other things, it's not something I would just do by itself, but if I was out doing other things it's a fun and rewarding side activity during a main activities. There's also unique treasure around each level that will either break if you get hit or will explode after a set amount of time. It's always fun to explore to find these treasures and they're worth a metric shittone of money, so maneuvering yourself back to the safehouse in time without being caught or attacked is both tense and exciting with a massive reward on the table, consequently failing and losing the treasure is a gutpunch as you make your way back to try again, but for me the prospect of hundreds of coins just makes me want to knuckle down and try again. Unless it's on the opposite side of the map which isn't unheard of. So the treasures are a great addition that can really put you ahead and because they're worth coins and only coins you don't need to find them to buy all the games items, but they're like a big executive bonus. Point is, they're a great addition to those looking for more productive gameplay, but won't effect those who can't be bothered, unlike this game's other major exploratory mechanic, the clue bottles. I mentioned that these were good in the first game because the levels were open but not so open that they'd become tedious to find, plus the levels were linear so there were only so many places they could have been. Well they're back and There are 2 major issues here that causes the clue bottles to not work in band of thieves. 1 the environments are too open and so it becomes a slog to try and navigate every single inch to find every clue bottle, it's like trying to find 30 specific needles in a particularly large haystack and the bigger issue is that there's no way to tell where you've been. Some of these areas are distinct enough to tell, but there are so many bottles in nondescript areas and if you get turned around it's really easy to forget where you've looked and where you haven't and so end up just wandering around. I was trying to make it so I found all of the cluebottles before I did the story missions in an episode, but at one point I had to stop recording because I'd been wandering for an hour and found 29 out of 30 bottles and didn't want to wast harddrive space on nothingness. Then some time through the game I just gave up the ghost because it was so monotonous aimlessly wandering to find these cluebottles. I do have a 100% save, and here's proof. Money is the universal unit in this game to buy more gameplay and the methods to do so are actually rewarding, but shifting a mechanic that worked in a linear game into an open space just doesn't work without severe reworking. At least let us

buy a map with the clue bottle locations for each specific episode, that way it's a workable compromise. Besides, considering most of the theoretically best items and abilities are bought from the safehouse, so the powerups the game rewards you with aren't even that good, even sly's unimpressed (slyimpression) ugh, I've found better gifts in neylas litterbox. (me) Ew. (game) Then he goes to far the other way with treasure (show) There's no breaks on the ra-nevermind. But regardless of how boring the clue bottles are to find, the traversal of these environments are smooth as butter and crisp the movement controls are of course still akin to that of a 3d platformer, but a good 3d platformer so you characters feel very weighty with predictable and jumps and movements and the freerunning aspects are simple and satisfying. The game builds a bunch of platforming challenges like climbing this tower while avoiding falling ice or climbing this tower wit one mistake causing you to fall for ages or traversing obstacle courses to get to a key item which can take many forms and there are situationally unique objects all over the place, from the giant bandsaw to the boats, the traintracks, elephants and so on. So exploring and manuvering yourself is simple, intuitive, smooth and most of all fun, with more abilities being added through the game. Climbing poles, sliding along narrow ledges, parkouring all over the place, it's just fun to navigate and traverse these worlds, and if you can get the basic act of getting from point a to point b to be fun then stop digging, you've struck oil. While I could spend hours wandering, there comes a time when you have to stop smelling the roses and walk the beaten path. And obviously this games mission structure is where you'll get the vast majority of the games milage, as I mentioned, broadly speaking there are 3 types of missions in this game, recon missions where you gather intelligence, setup missions which are as eclectic as the come and the big episode heist. First of all we have the recon missions which all play the same way and are as standard as they come, you go somewhere and take pictures of the main subjects of the episode and that's pretty much it, you get to see some unique enviroments but otherwise all of these missions play the same. While I like the idea of the reconnaissance missions, they wear on me after 8 times having to do them. Where most missions find a way to stand out at least to some degree, the recon missions are all basically the same so they become a bit of a dull routine. Granted, it's a good way to get you to grips with the structure of the level around you so you can familiarise yourself with the unique gimmicks and layout of everything, but come on. Would it kill them to find a unique way to open one of these levels, it doesn't help that these missions can be very long. I'm not against the idea but the recon missions were overdone and boring. But then again this game as a whole is a bit overdone but we'll get to that. Of course with the setup, it might be hard to do any other type of opening but to quote 3 days grace (me) because at heart I'm still an edgy 14 year old (game) If you can't stand the way this place is, take yourself to higher places, or to put that in another way, if you've conditioned the game so that the setup can only be done in a certain way, change the structure from the ground up, even if it's only for one episode. So recon missions necessary but very tedious. Then we have the regular setup missions, now there are far too many different missions with such wildly varying goals for me to properly go over all of them but rest assured these missions by enlarge are the highlight of the gameplay. Situationally they always have something to do with the ultimate goal of the episode, which varies episode to episode. But they usually involve a few things, stealing something, to use it for something else. Breaking into a place to sabotage something, following or tailing someone, but there's more nuance than that

because there are so many wildly varying missions that take advantage of the unique attributes of each landscape and of the gameplay. And the way it escalates to the final heist is engenius, sometimes you're not quite sure what's even going on when you're doing these things but then in the end you'll see everything come together in a gratifying, oh now I get it kinda way. And the fact is there are so many missions throughout the game, and they so rarely do a full repeat it's very impressive, even the similar missions feel different because they're presented differently. Some of the best missions in my opinion is for one, where play as murray and have to kick the crap outta 50 prison inmates using your basic attacks as well as a bunch of different area specific traps, there's this one mission where you needed to first platform your way through a saw mill then go outside and redirect a laser from the saw mill into various object ending up with melting the ice. I really like this one because it's a pure platforming experience where you need to use your own wits to figure out how to navigate the environment so you can finish this really long really treacherous mission and as you know the platforning is very smooth here, any time you have to chase neyla it's a fun challenging time making sure to mimic her movements correctly (runningsoundeffect) *hitfail* (me) Come on, she was asking for it (game) ransacking an entire mansion to steal a disguise, traversing the environment to get on top of these elephants to steal their precious gems, there are too many inventive and exciting missions to count, you never know what to expect, and there are so many well integrated and fun missions, another one would be any of the traincar levels. If there's one thing that never ceases to be fuckin awesome, it's train based levels in videogames, because it's basically instant adrenaline just add water. Fighting on an open area that's moving at 60 miles per hour while inches from the ground if presented in a real context is very exhilarating, I always just throught there's something inherently cool about that, like you're in an action movie scene. See uncharted 2 for another example. Train sections don't always work, but they do here. Fun fact though, it's easier in the ps2 version but if you hop correctly, you can hop on top of the traincar and skip most of the level, which is funny because in the final heist there's a contextual action that requires you to be on the lower level, so failing that you can skip it go right up to the front of the train and whack the clockwerk stomach until the cows come home. But I think my favorite sequence of missions are the missions leading up to breaking sly out of prison, I wouldn't necessarily call it fun, but it's harrowing and crushingly tense. Because you're playing as bentley, and bentley within the story and the gameplay is the most frail of the 3 and it's also one of the many examples of ludonarrative synchronicity in the game and probably the best example. Bentley's alone and afraid and is completely outclassed by every enemy around him, in a creepy hostile environment with creepy music, gothic architecture worthy of castlevania and so on, but with that cat out of the bag, bentley and murray are the 2 extra playable characters and they're a very mixed bag. The game is clearly built for sly and so when you play as bentley or murray, you can't help but feel like it's unnecessarily restrictive. Summary being that it's just not fun to navigate these hubs as bentley and murray, their missions are generally fine because they're built for the characters limitations if anything else, bentley usually hacking or blowing stuff up and murray usually smashing stuff, but just getting around is not fun and even if you exclusively do the exploration as sly and only play as the other 2 for missions as they come up, you still need to get to the missions so you still have to navigate the hubs which are build for an entirely different gameplay style. In theory, having the extra playable characters was a necessary

extension to the gameplay but in practice, it’s just irritating to play as them. And there will always be missions where you have to play as them, they can’t even pickpocket coins from guards so there’s literally no reason to play as them outside of missions, they're afterthoughts, murray is slightly more practical in that he’s the most powerful person in the group and can kill most guards in a few hits. Even flashlight guards were made my little bitches, but otherwise the alternate characters aren’t fun to use. They get slightly better after you buy some of the more exuberant upgrades but those don’t come until later on. Before that though, let's talk about thiefnet. It’s a bit of an outlandish idea to have a website dedicated to buying and selling stolen goods and gear, like who’s buying all of this treasure. But the treasure you get from guards and around the level can be sold here, you might think it’s better later when we just get the money right when we steal the treasure but not necessarily. The only time you’re going to be spending money is when you’re on the computer so if you're already there having to pop over to the other tab and press a few buttons is almost no work at all and helps build the world. But the upgrades are also a mixed bag, the only one that’s always useful is the smokebomb because it instantly makes you lose pursuers, like instantly. Otherwise there are very few useful go-to upgrades, the stealth slide is fun but not very practical as running is about the same speed and doesn’t cause too much trouble, the paraglider’s fun but is hardly a powerup as it’s story mandatory. But there were many powerups that were useless or just baffling, when am I going to use the music box, or why would I use an attack to confuse an enemy when that’s less efficient than just killing them outright. And you’d be wasting your attack power anyway. You have a secondary bar under your healthbar which indicates how many secondary powerups you can use, and if you run out, you’re back to standard attacks. Which is fine and it regenerates with health pickups, but there are few powerups that enhance gameplay, most of them just come across as gimmicks for the sake of arbitrary variety, and I rarely used any of them, if you liked using them, fair enough, but most of them were pointless for me and I only bought them out of want of something to do with all of the endless coins I collected. Experimentation is fun but there’s not much that I could really integrate into my playstyle, but I can at least appreciate the alternate playstyles this provides, even then though most powerus did functionally the same thing, kill enemies with generally the same efficiency as everything else, so it’s good to have the powerups, but I’m not really into them. Granted, murray’s fists of flame were a good addition because they were a one hit kill and bentley’s adrenaline burst and hoverpacks powerups were good if only because without them getting around as hin is arduous as hell, and the passive upgrades like juggernaut throw and atlus strength are good upgrades if only because they enhance aspects of the character rather than staple on arbitrary mechanics. So once again, the powerup system is a good idea and somewhat useful but with too many gimmick over actual substance. While I’m complaining, There are some missions that fall flat as well, going through the cave to get transmitters from bears mouths is very dull and it’s far too easy to fail just from the controls occasionally not registering, but I managed to get it in one try this time. Or how about the mission where you need to go into a crypt then go all over the map trapping ghosts who won’t hold still long enough for you to get a beat on them, any time you have to tail anyone the otherwise excellent pace screeches to a halt, any time you have to crawl along in a tub of dynamite it made the games pace also screech to a halt. And if you get blown up, you get to start again, though in this one case there’s no reason you can't just blow the crap out of

everyone around you before carrying the dynamite up, everything about this style of gameplay is terrible. But at least that's a gimmick that's somewhat integrated into the core gameplay, last time we had a somewhat lame but otherwise inoffensive string of minigames and while that's largely the same here, they've multiplied, that is to say, there are less different minigames but more times we have to do each individual one. They've doubled down on turret sections and I'm as weary of turret sections as I was before. Seriously, who thought it was fun to have to stand in one place and shoot, plus aiming with the analogue sticks have never been smooth so accurately aiming is arduous and frustrating, turret sections just never got fun and there are so many of them that throw way too much at you, spoilers, even the final boss is a partial turret section (mepresentsfallingdry) Look, all my christmases coming at once, horray. (game) The bentley hacking minigames on the other hand which are usually part of larger missions have been expanded and refined. It's still just a twin stick shooter. But you do them often enough that you familiarise yourself with all of the mechanics, but not so often that they become mundane. And they expand on the mechanics and threats somewhat, but not so much as to ruin the general simplicity, so this is a neat and fun little game mode requiring no further comment. There's this irritating tank game you have to play as murray all of once, which is inoffensive if anything. You drive around a small arena and shoot, it's just kinda baffling, it makes me wonder why it exists, I don't even know what to say about it, the physics are slightly irritating, you flip over too easily, it exists because they needed to have some sort of competition based on the mission context, but could they not have made it into some sort of fight, or even an arm wrestling competition, ya-know something that would put murray's unique skillset to use while not having to make new gameplay. The one-off rhythm sequence is interesting, it's kinda like the mz ruby bossfight, but without much of the charm, but it takes a bit of skill if nothing else, and is otherwise just pressing buttons, so it's fine. The only other gamemode that doesn't directly tie into something in the base gameplay would be the rc chopper sections, they're basically fine as well, you drop bombs or shoot stuff while maneuvering yourself to avoid obstacles, it's not overly complex but it doesn't need to be, the controls are slightly slippery, you tend to move all over the place somewhat uncontrollably, the shooting's responsive, it's fine if a bit shallow gimmicky and underdeveloped. Like I said, there isn't as much gimmicky gameplay in terms of pure modes but there is more of them individually, you have enough turret sections that they become tedious and the same goes for the rc choppers, but every other main gimmick in missions ties into the standard gameplay, if you count bentley and murray as standard, and overall the missions are a very net positive. Not all home runs but there's plenty in this game to like and plenty of missions to dislike, but if you're willing to take the good with the bad, there's a lot to enjoy. And that leads into the heists. Each of the 8 episodes has a big heist which are big extended missions that each end with some form of boss. They are actually very similar to the regular missions with the scale increased, what would normally be a few missions are compressed into one mission as we slowly pay off everything that was set up. And it's really quite satisfying to see everything come together, ultimately ending up with another piece of the clockwerk carcass. In one case you trigger an all out battle between the 2 sides of a minor war as a cover up for a robbery, you have to sabotage the dam in episode 3 while the temples defenses try a fullscale onslaught to stop you, you have to do a multi step process to bring a statue down on the head of a counterfeiting operation, blowing up a bridge then using a graceful dance to distract from the

clockwerk wings being stolen an awesome train heist. These are all quite epic operations that feel like a fitting conclusion to all of the prelim. There's nothing I haven't said about the regular missions that don't also apply to the heists, just scaled up and they're all great. And the bossfights, well, they're a mixed bag. Some of these episodes don't even end with a proper boss, some of them just end with some weird sequence like the episode 4 chase, or in the case of episode 6 a glorified miniboss with the RC chopper and ones like the catessa are way way too easy, you bairly even need to dodge, just wack. But there are some good one's famously the hectic bossfight with dimitri, the one on one between murray and rajan the inventive bossfight with bentley and jean bison which uses the enviroment, so everyone has at least one chance to shine. It's a shame that the worst bossfight happens to be the final boss but that's not **just** because of the bossfight itself. If I were to sum up the gameplay in one word it would be ambitious, they really did throw alot of shit at the wall and you can tell that suckerpunch had passion for what they were doing and it shines through. Sure it's not perfect but this game is massive and in the end they created something really special. However while the gameplay is damn good, the real meat and potatoes of this game is in the story.

Because I'd say that the vast majority of this game from a writing point of view is one of the most elegantly and skillfully written stories ive seen in across of media, not just videogames. The adherence to continuity, the tightness of the writing and dialogue, the individual arcs, the foreshadowing, the gripping emotion and stakes, it takes you on a ride, it has all the hallmarks of having a very singular and deliberate focus, which makes sense because as far as I'm aware, this game's sole writer was Nate fox who was only partially responsible for the first game's story. Dude, you don't get enough credit. I should mention first that this game has a prequel promotional comic that's worth checking out, it's mostly just for world building so It's kinda irrelevant to the events of this game but it's still pretty good. So as before the game starts in medias res and I still refuse to pronounce it rais. With all three members of the cooper gang breaking into a museum in Cairo for seemingly unknown reasons. Right from the beginning we see that things have changed and all 3 members have grown to be agents in the field. Like before this is a great prologue that immidiatly re-establishes these characters through dialogue and interactions. Everybody's introduced with a freezeframe and a title this time around (show) (megs) (casualracist) SERIOUSLY (game) Sly doesn't take it seriously because he's confident, bently is shaking in his boots because he's never been directly in the field before and murray has done a complete 180 and is now the hulking bruiserweight of the group. Sly makes his way to the top of the museum only to find out that their primary goal, the pieces of the deceased clockwerk were already stolen. We're reintroduced to carmelita and introduced to a rookie constable, neyla who drops some hints regarding a group called the klaww gang. A chase ensues and just barely get away, but not after some surprisingly out of place dialogue (show) (me) I haven't seen passive aggression this bad since my last trip to omaha (game) This prologue starts with alot of mystery and gradually builds up all of this intrigue before answering everything in the opening cutscene following an exciting chase sequence. You may say that this is just a copy of the first game's opening, but the first game did the prologue perfectly, so what more could you want? And this one has a much grander scale with the bigger budget, so I'd argue this prologue does the same thing that sly 1's prologue did, only better, much better. We get a recap of the story so far, clockwerk dead parents, fight, clockwerk still lives, find missing

clockwerk parts to destroy take out mysterious klaww gang. Incedentally, sly specifically mentions his parents this time around not just his fater, so that confirms that the feindish 5 also killed his mother, whew. It may seem like a simple plot like before, but trust me as it goes on, it becomes much less simple than it appears. One thing this game is very good at is luring you into a false sense of security, and the simple presentation making way for depth and complexity is part of that. Of course the inter character dialogue is on the border of perfect, there are so many quotable lines and so many character specific moments that if switched around and presented in the same ways would not work. (show) There's almost nothing about the word to word writing for this game that didn't work for me, I can count on one hand the amount of lines that fell flat, all the dialogue has a degree of punch to it and conveyes the personality of each character to a tee (show)and the dry as hell deliver of all of these comedic lines are expertly done, so this game can be funny without being an ouright comedy game, but it's funnier than most just from dry quips (show) but before we get into the individual characters, I want to hop right into the story structure, it demands to be talked about, so there be spoilers. Right from the beginning I knew something was up with neyla. I'd played the third game first so, in seeing her I knew that something big involver her was set to happen and they still surprised me, several times. So right from the beginning band of thieves starts by luring you into a false sense of security. The prologue and the opening episode is very reminiscent of the first game with a big operation that goes off without a hitch, ending with a bossfight with dimitri. And from there the start subtly changing things and gradually taking away your safety blanket, the next episode ends with you succeeding but with rajan getting away, it's the first time you didn't have an absolute win but you think, well okay, I guess they just wanted to have a second episode with rajan, and everything seems to be going well until Neyla; who'd been an ally up to this point betrays sly, resulting in him murray and rajan all being arrested and carmelita being framed as having worked with the cooper gang, you realise that this is the first time that the cooper gang has ever faced total defeat, for the first time they've hit rock bottem. From there it's up to bentley to break sly and murray out of prison by himself, which he succeeds in what is probably the best sequence in the game. From there things get back on track, but you start to notice a key recurring theme throughout the game since episode 2. No heist since the first goes off without something going wrong, even in episode 4 the catessa gets away. Then in episode 5 bentley gets caught in a crashing blimp and very nearly gets arrested. But then something funny happens in episode 6. Everything goes fine and you meet minimal resistance in getting multiple clockwerk parts. Between the gang already reaching thier lowest point and the sudden success you start to think everything's gonna be okay. Keep in mind this game to my knowledge doesn't tell you the exact number of episodes, so for all you know this could be halfway through the game with episode 6 acting as a second episode 1. You as well as the gang get a little too proud at the sudden success and as the saying goes, pride comes before a fall. You're caught and the leader of the klaww gang ends up with everything, and the sheer distress of bentley here is palpable (show) everything you've worked for everything you've accomplished, wiped out in an instant, it sets you up to feel yet another false sense of security and pulls the rug out from under you expertly and now in failure the only thing you can do pick yourself back up, dust yourself off and try against all odds to pull through in the end, Even having to run for your life just to get to the final area via a sabotaged battery, thankfully the big plan hinged on battery's powered by the

northern lights and they specified arepeggio was getting “another” battery so that answers a question I had. And the sheer bottoming out is presented with so much weight and anguish once they got there (show) You can feel the heavyness of everything that’s happened, leading into the finale which is all do or die. From beginning to end the game always has you right where it wants you emotionally, always knowing the perfect time to pull on the choke-chain for maximum impact. And impact is something this game does perfectly? If I were to sum up the story of this game in a single phrase it would be almost perfect. What I just described there in broad strokes was already really great, and it only gets better the more you analyse it. The first act, episodes 1-5 I would say are absolutely perfect. If they found a way to wrap up the game at that point, it would be pretty much perfect. The second act, episodes 6 and 7 are great, maybe a bit padded but still great. But the third act and climax episode 8 is where they really dropped the ball. Had this game stuck the ever important landing this could have been in my top 10 favorite games, but a bad ending can ruin even the best of stories. See Game of Thrones, lost, dexter, 2 and a half men, roseanne, st. elsewhere, how I Met Your mothe-wow have there been any popular tv shows that ended well. Anyway see most american tv show for that particular crash course. A good ending can be the exclamation point to a great arc or the drop of piss that poisons the soup. Band of thieves is far from ruined by its ending, but it’s a rough one. However before we discuss why I hate the final portion of the game, I need to examine why it was such a tragedy. First off I want to examine Neyla (mecoveringeyes) Jesus internet, not what I meant (game) Neyla is the newest member of the central ensemble and could arguably be considered the main character as she’s basically central to everything going on and is present throughout almost the entire game. The phrase “strong powers of persuasion” are mentioned in the manual which implies that her way with words goes deeper than just a charming personality. As it happens she was hired on to interpol when it was discovered that she was manipulating other people to do her university work. They thought she would have a leg up in manipulating notorious criminals. So they themselves hired a corrupt cop, in trying to have someone who could play others, they themselves got played. She’s the one who subtly is manipulating the events of the game, she drops the hint about the klaww gang, she helps out the cooper gang for the first few episodes when she’s not legally allowed to get involved. Sly and her start to develope a thing for each other and sly even asks her out on a date, but it was all a ruse to get the cooper gang right where she wanted them. Which gives the immediate guttural reaction of (me) you bitch (game) Because not only was she playing sly, she was playing you the player. Neyla’s turn itself lures you into a false sense of security because it makes you think that’s as far as her only for the rabbit hole to go deeper and deeper. You think that she’s just doing her job, but then why did she frame carmelita, why is she going after clockwerk parts, something seems fishy. So there is so much going on with her and it’s endlessly intriguing and so when the big third act twist happens, which I guess I’ll spoil, that she was secretly working for the klaww gang the whole time, it’s the final thread that makes everything make sense. There’s so much foreshadowing and clever hints staring you right in the face that you don't see until it all comes together. It should be no secret at this point if I mention that she ends up being the main antagonist. Ain’t no suckerpuch production’s main villain going to be an underdeveloped pathetic frail weakling like arpeggio. It means that one of Neyla’s main strengths as a main villain is that you never even suspect her. In the beginning she seemingly comes across as what

everybody would scream at carmelita for not being, a rational person who sees that crime is a spectrum and it's never black and white, employing aspects of vigilante work when being a cop wasn't working, you can work with criminals if it's a means to an end. She has an appealing meanstreak to her and even a bit of an unapologetic badbitch attitude, but very witty and charming along with that which is where her and sly find such great chemistry. The great thing about this is that when she does turn, it's not even that much of a shift, imagine that, a villain who's pre-established ally personality lines up with their villainous personality so the shift makes sense in hindsight and feels natural. But I think one of the bigger issues with the second act is that she shifts from manipulative devious bitch to a bit of a mustache twirler which really didn't work, it felt slightly forcefully delivered. She betrays everyone, The cooper gang, carmelita, the contessa, interpol and eventually even the klaww gang, it almost becomes a running joke that nobody suspects her, she's always in it for herself, and she such a fantastically devious bitch that nobody ever suspects her and she becomes more and more hatable with every passing interaction . And her character is expertly portrayed by one alyssa glidewell. Who really makes these shifts in personality natural, she really does sound like smarmy underhanded bitch, both as an ally and as a villain. And I'll specify NEYLA is a great character specifically NEYLA. Interestingly, alyssa also plays carmelita in this game and another famous role in videogames is being the voice krystal in star fox assault (me) Seriously, is she typecast as a half naked furry (game) while she plays neyla really well, carmelia… not so much. Where Roxanna Ortega didn't really have any fire to her delivery, I find alyssa's portrayal to be very dry and passionless. I just don't get a sense that she was putting anything into her performance, and there are some… less than pleasant deliveries. (show) I would have preferred Roxanna and I also would have preferred if she didn't suddenly lose her accent. Which is a shame because what they do with her is really interesting. Every game in the trilogy, carmelita has to defy her own principles in increasingly heavy ways. Working with sly under a new context each time. After the embarrassment she faced at the hands of the cooper gang last time she's basically right back to where she started. Chasing after the cooper gang and inadvertently cleaning up after them, but then she's caught in the wrong place at the wrong time in a ruse by Neyla, when Neyla uses pictures of carmelita dancing with a disguised sly as evidence for her having been in cahoots. She's arrested, fired and left in disgrace. Then even the catessa tries to brainwash her. (show) (mestoich)... (show) (me) This is either as a result of somebody's fetish or the cause of somebody's fetish (game) After she's broken out, she spends time trying to prove her innocence, but is forced to work with the cooper gang in and out of gameplay. She's conflicted with the want to do what she feels is right, but is trapped in the loop of being a disgraced former cop and framed wanted criminal, failing to clear her name time after time but not wanting to resort to crime. But she takes charge of every situation she's in and even manages to catch murray at one point leading to some great dialogue where you see for the first time that even though she's a cop and an Irrationally lawful good, she's a decent kind hearted human being above all else, she serves but she also wants to protect, and also is smart enough to wear a jacket in freezing whether what a concept, seriously what was up with that in sly 1? She becomes alot more human with this fish out of water storyline, and alot more sympathetic in having to adapt to circumstances beyond her control. We still don't know much about her other than she's an absolutist, an obsessive, a workaholic, slightly insane, and we don't really find out

much more about her here other than some appealing details but we see her in a much more vulnerable position and seeing her hit rockbottem alongside the cooper gang as genuinely heartbreaking enough that you want to help her overcome this and in the end you do. And this is very subtly foreshadowed, you see the foreshadowing in this game is some of the best I've seen, there is so much that you can come through and pick apart to see the little teases, these can be pretty big pieces, like carmelita mentioning the catessa in the prologue, which at first you think is just for the sake of world building until the catessa shows up. But then you get into the subtleties, like this scene (showdanceneyla) Right there you can see the wheels spinning where neyla sees an opportunity forming to take out the cooper gang and carmelita at the same time.(me) though the fact that neither recognise sly even though he's not covering his face or even changing his voice is a bit of a hard pill to swallow… Like are the pipes in france made of lead… and I'm part french so that would explain alot (game) Or when sly says (arrest) and low and behold, what happens? He's put into a situation where the only option he's left with is to allow himself to be arrested. Sly in the beginning was taking the piss out of the codenames bentley gave everybody, specifically bently's "the wizard" moniker but then when bentley breaks the sly out of prison, with a sudden newfound respect for bentley he says this (wizard) A recontextualised setup from the beginning that shows the character growth. Possibly my favorite piece of foreshadowing in the game, is a single line of dialogue (I'llfindyoucooper) The reason this is so great is because it's the final sting before the credits (show) It's a simple but incredible recontextualisation, where the opening had carmelita enraged at sly getting away again, the closing was after her and sly had gotten to know each other on the chopper ride to prison after being able to let their guard down, and now you see a spark of something there. That's not an "I'm gonna catch you" I'll find you cooper, that's an "I can't wait to tussle with you again" I'll find you cooper. Great moment great scene great closing moment. There is so much foreshadowing in this game and once again that really makes everything feel so deliberate and clever, with a tight linear focus that juxtaposes against the games open ended nature where it's fun to go back and pick apart. Let's talk about the main cast, the big thing this time around would be the fact that all 3 members are field agents and have to adapt to the situation in their own ways. Sly starts off a little too overconfident for his own good after basically having an undefeated streak from the past game. There's of course the looming tension of clockwerks return but he feels that's something he can handle. This comes across as slightly irritating, but it's overconfidence that plays into the story and costs him. He lets his guard down and ultimately fails. Bentley is the weak, frail one who practically has a panic attack every time he has to step outside of the safehouse, and murray's big thing is that he has to prove with his newfound confidence that he's better than his former self, especially prominent in this fight (show) He proves with his fists that he's more than what people think of him, look at that, he's called fat as an insult then immediately proves him wrong. All of this is brought fourth by the fantastic voices of kevin miller, matt olson and chris murhpy who have really come in theri roles as these characters and portrey them so expertly. (show) They really bring these characters to life like nobody else could imagine. Fittingly as the two overconfident characters, sly and murray are the ones who are cut down while the perpetually afraid bentley is left alone and afraid to fend for himself, which leads to some great dialogue by itself. (show) The gang hitting rock bottom in episode 3 is probably the highlight of the game from the story's perspective and there are a bunch of little details that

play into this, they were separated for weeks… weeks (show) murray and sly are subject to glorified torture and mind control by the catessa, think about how damaging that is. This is very very dark, possibly the darkest episode in the series. Everything is presented as so bleak and hopless making the eventual prisonbreak and reuniting such an emotional moment, and everybody's better off for it. (show) It gave the gang a much greater appreciation for each other which was starting to waver in the earlier parts of the game. (show) But now the gang's tighter than ever and this shines through in every dialogue from this point forward. So sly the witty, charismatic antihero, bentley, the brainiac who's in a perpetual state of fear, murray, the lumbering behemoth, it's all still there but they grow a much deeper connection, they're not just partners, they grow to be family. The worst thing I have to say about this 4 episode sequence of the game is that the rest of the game has to live up to it. But there's also the matter of this (showmurray) it's hard to present genuine anger in media like this because it's something that could scare off the viewing audience, the younger crowd, so when murray is in a fit of rage it's presented comically which takes some of the impact away, but that's more or less a nitpick, but otherwise this 4 episode sequence is almost perfect, pulling you in and pushing you down so the rising back up is the most triumphant feeling you'll ever feel. Which is why the game's quality starts to waver after the 5th episode. Let's talk about the Klaww gang, spelled with a k and 2 w's. First of all that's a much better name than fiendish 5. But I'd say that there's a good reason it doesn't make reference to the exact number of people in the gang because that's actually another bait and switch as the klaww gang has 2 secret members. The rogues gallery in this game consists of Dimitri, Rajan, The Catessa, Jean Bison, Arpeggio and Neyla. The exact goal of this group coming together is very nebulous at first, but as the game unfolds it becomes much clearer who they are, what their goals are and how each character is putting forth their part of the overall goal. Dimitry is the one everybody remembers from this game, but I've always found him annoying, he's the Ralligh of this game, the joke character they use to ease you into the game. But he's taken on a life of his own and I just don't get it, he's eccentric and speaks really weird as his knowledge of english comes from old workout videos, but he's not particularly deep. He's a failed artist who turned to crime as revenge for the world not accepting his unique style of art and uses a nightclub as a front for his counterfeiting operation, he's a fun character but I don't feel he's worthy of the attention he gets. He's all sizzle and no steak which apparently is enough for people. But as an introduction, turned vital role, he does the job and has some good moments (show). And he gets better in his next appearance. Rajan is an interesting case as he obviously has a meanstreak but also has a level of self consciousness as he wants everyone to know that he's a big deal. Growing up in poverty and finding crime as a means to an end, he was the catalyst for the big spice operation that became the central plot. He's incensed at the idea that he could be outdone by anyone, much less riffraff like the cooper gang. His pride ultimately being his undoing. The catssa is a really interesting because she's a massive bait and switch, a high ranking warden that uses hypnosis and what can only be described as torture to get her prisoners to tell them of their fortunes and where they're stashed. Using a prison as a front for illegal torture based extortion racquet, that's ice cold, she's probably the second best villain in the game second to neyla, she has so many great moments(show). Then jean bison, he's an 1850's man who got caught up in the gold rush and ended up being buried alive and frozen. But now he's unfrozen and tragically believes the only way to progress is at the sharm

edge of an axe, which would have made him a hero in the 1850's but the villain in the early 2000s. Which actually provides a classy commentary on unnecessary expansion of civilisation and destruction of nature. He seems like a simpleton, but he's much smarter than he lets on, ending up being the only villain to completely foil the cooper gangs plans. But he's also a tragic figure in that he's really just misunderstood and out of his time. Then finally we have arpeggio, the brains of the klaww gang who was a studious bird who was at the top of his class all of his life but physically underdeveloped and seeing an opportunity he constructed this plan with all of these different pieces being put into place so that when the time was right he could get all of the different pieces of clockwerk together to create a new strong body and a plan in place for imortality, he's very weak but also mysterious and underdeveloped like clockwork but for much different reasons. So I guess as far as ending spoilers go this was his plan. So one of the subplots that were being set up the entire game was that of an illegal indian spice that was being distributed by the klaww gang. Used in excess, it would cause sudden uncontrollable anger in the consumer. It's introduced so nonchalauntly, you don't even think it's going to play a big role, but then it slowly becomes a central point of the story, so part of the game becomes shut down the illegal spice operation while also stealing clockwerks parts. It's being produced by rejan, used by the catessa because it makes people susceptible to hypnosis, distributed by jean bison all spearheaded by the leader of the gang arpeggio. But because it becomes such a central point you wonder where it's going, and it turns out that dimitry was secretly feeding all of his club guests with spice, by why? The spice make you angry when eaten in excess, so Arpeggio hooked up the catessa's hypnosis technology to the airship and will use it on the people of paris to trigger a laser light show that will activate the spice so they'll become incensed with hate like what happened with murray in episode 4, another bit of foreshadowing, all powered by the northern lights batteries by jean bison, so everything starts to interweave into arpeggio's plan, all of this will make him with clockwerks carcass as a new body immortal… somehow. And this is where things start to fall apart a bit, the nature of many of these things you realise are poorly explained and as such are confusing. Structurally there wasn't much time or them to explain these things, but I shouldn't have to break out the three days grace again. So clockwerk was fuel by his hate correct? Well how are other people's hate supposed fuel him. Moreover, there's a fundamental misunderstanding of what the word hatred means. Putting everybody into a rage frenzy isn't hatred, that's anger. Hatred is a simmering pot on the stove, anger is a whistling kettle, hatred is a scar, anger is a cut. But there a massive elephant in the room in this case, the entire spice operation had been shut down for months, how do I know this, there were a few episodes where they explicitly said there were several time gaps of weeks at a time. But if the plan relied on dimitry having fed the spice to his guests, him being caught would have stopped that. So let's just say the time gap between the episode where dimitri is caught and episode 8 where this plan unfolds is 2 months. Are you telling me the spice somehow remained in people systems potently enough to activate the rage after that long? I'm not sure that I can buy that. But those are small potatoes, the real issues begin the moment Neyla predictably betrays Arpeggio and what happens, she somehow for reasons unexplained merges herself with clockwerk and this happens (show) (mefacepalme) Ya know the last time I saw this I was so utterly bewildered I gave myself a concussion… that's not a joke, that really happened (game) Look, I'm willing to accept the outlandish premise of neyla merging with

clockwerk, I'm even okay with sly just standing by and letting it happen. But there are way too many things that go unexplained, and to be quite frank, they ruin neyla and clockwerk at the same time. Neyla was a great villain, clockwerk was a great villain but combining them doesn't work because they individually work for reasons that don't mesh. And trying to have neyla do a clockwerk impression sounds so forced and cringeworthy (show) The voiceacting is very stilted and unnatural, you can tell that it was not something that the voice actress was good at and the delivery is just so awkward and cringeworthy (me) I have the strangest sense of deja-vu right now (game) The presentation is so forced and so poorly presented that it ultimately takes away from everything that we've seen up to this point. Neyla's a great villain, Clockwerk's a great villain Clockla is shit. I once made a video telling how I would do it, but my basic outline was revive clockwerk, don't merge them, then have neyla use clockwerk ultimately betraying him as well. but this? It just seems like they had no idea how to end it and hastily threw this plotpoint together 5 minutes before deadline. Then it gets worse, after a series of really boring missions where you need to wander all over the airship to sabotage it while avoiding clockla flying around, then you enlist carmelita to help fight clockla, suddenly you're at the final boss, like very suddenly, and it's a really obnoxious turret section. There are too many things to contend with, everything's moving in multiple directions so where you might be pointing your crosshairs is not even close to where the bullet will end up, funnily I actually thought because I was a tailgunner, I'd put on the iron maiden song tailgunner (medancing) *facemelt* wow I forgot how much this song sucks (game) It does get better, clockla takes murray and bentley and the next part is a challenging platforming section followed by a smackdown on clockla. (show) The final hurrah comes when you have to crack open clockla's mouth and take the… hate chip? (me) Cest que fuck? (game) What? What is going on, can somebody stop and tell me what any of this is? What is this hate chip, is it the source of clockwerks power? How does that work, I thought his hate was what inspired him to become immortal, not literally what's making him immortal. (IHAVESOMANYQUESTIONS) But in the process bentley is gravely injured and clockla explodes. So after all of that, the ending cutscene is actually pretty good, in fact I'd even say great, carmelita destroys the hate chip thereby destroying clockwerk once and for all and you watch all the pieces slowly disintegrate. Then immitady she arrests you, sly turns himself in to let the others go. And from there you have the great sequence where they open up to each other and you start to realise they really aren't so different after all. There is something there, sly naturally escapes which would probably undo carmelita's rehiring. The end. A great sequence which ultimatly ends the game on a much better note than the final boss left us on. (playoutside) (me) If you insist (lookoutwindow) (hell) well that's not happening (sit) This game is the definition of being on the verge of greatness (game) there's so much it does right, and had this game maintained it's quality from the first half, it would have been an all time favorite. It does everything right, until the end, and ultimately it leaves a negative taste in my mouth. I want to like Sly 2 Band Of Thieves like everybody else but I just can't. Well I still really do like this game, it's a very solid game. I'm not going to deny it, it does basically everything right, except for the portion of the game where clockla is in the game. Remember how it was a point made that sly 1 was notoriously shory, well suckerpunch certainly took that to heart and with a suddenly inflated budget overcompensated and made a game that was too long. This game isn't nearly as long as I remembered it being but I still maintain that this game is too long, there are 8 episodes and

they each range from 1.5 hours to 2 hours give or take depending on tendency to explore and look for clue bottles, in any case this game feels just slightly too padded, enough that it's noticeable and wears on me. The thing is, every episode serves a purpose and couldn't be cut without ruining the story, it's all necessary plot… until episode 6. Episdoe 6 is the first case of an episode where not much really happens of not except it sets up a false sense of security leading into the penultimate episode and the gangs ultimate fall from grace. There's even a mission where you have to break murray out of jail again because carmelita caught him while we weren't watching and you get a rare moment of interaction between murray and carmelita, it's a cool mission but has nothing to do with the plot as far as the episode is concerned, and honestly, there was no reason jean bison had to have 2 episodes, especially when dimitry only got one. So here's what I would have done, I would have integrated aspects of episode 6 and episode 7 to make a super episode. What if we had a longer episode where we managed to get a whole bunch of clockwerk pieces, have a mini bossfight with neyla, have the carmelita catching murray asde be integrated better and almost swindle the clockwerk talons as a final exclamation point only to have it all come crashing down via some guy who we've just met and have taken as a fool up until now, if you ask me that would have been more shocking and sudden with the added bonus of cutting the tedious parts of the game down enough to make the length more palatable, cut the fat without losing the meat. But fairs fair, the reinvented gameplay is great, the story, writing character interactions and everything that comes with that is on point. I can't stress enough how well this game was written, it plays with alot of adult themes in very mature ways, manipulation, torture, false identites, overcoming your past, and so on. This was true for the first game but if you just changed a few things about this game it would easily be an m rated game without changing anything, spice is basically an illegal drug, the catess straight up tortures people, there's a full blown war, but they skillfully make a very mature game e rated so anyone can enjoy it and appreciate it and that's the real strength of this game, this game transcends its subject matter it's premise and is just a genuinely amazingly written piece of media, sure it stars cartoon animals, but in the face of good writing that's irrelevant, ending aside this game nails it. You may not find this game a big challenge or engaging gameplay wise, but if you're in the market for a gripping emotional roller coaster, ending aside you'd find few games better than sly 2 band of thieves. There's very little I can say negative about it otherwise, it's a fantastic game in almost every way, but leaves itself inches from perfection. (Me) I can't stay mad at this game though, because it was maybe a bit over ambitious, and suckerpunch had alot of fun making this one (show) and their enjoyment shines through, while I may not consider this game the best game in the trilogy, I could still see myself coming back to it from time to time. Over ambitious perhaps, so Flying too close to the sun may leave you burnt, but then again, it might just give you a nice tan (medistopian) (me) oh my god, dystopian future tgx (med) in the flesh… or what's left of it, I need your help to save the future in a contrived and confusing time travel story. (Me) *ponder* fuckthat *lasergun* (med) *disintegrates* (me) fuck time travel stories (end)
Expand the mask positive and negative before having a shatter effect